

DR. ELIOT'S NEW RELIGION.

On Thursday, July 22nd, Dr. Charles W. Eliot, former president of Harvard University, delivered an address before a summer school of Theology at Cambridge, in which he said some surprising things. The following is the abstract which has gone over the country in the daily papers. Prophesying the advent of a new religion, he is reported as saying:

"It will not be bound by dogma or creed. Its workings will be simple, but its field of action limitless. Its discipline will be training in the development of co-operative good-will. It will attack all forms of evil. There will be no supernatural element. It will place no reliance on anything but the laws of nature. Prevention will be its watchword, and a skilled surgeon one of its members.

"The new religion will not be based upon authority; the future generation is to be led, not driven. In the new religion there will be no personification of natural objects; no deification of remarkable human beings.

"The new religion will not teach that character can be changed quickly. It will not deal chiefly with sorrow and death, but with joy and life.

"God will be so immanent that no intermediary will be needed. Its priests will strive to improve social and industrial conditions.

"The new religion will not attempt to reconcile people to present ills by the promise of future compensation."

This so-called "new religion" is neither religion nor new. It is an old worn out rejection of religion, as at all needed by man, and a confession of reliance upon human nature and the natural evolution of the race. This is Unitarianism teaching its own sequence, bearing its own fruit and gone to seed. It is a rejection of the Christian religion, denying all that is supernatural, the incarnation, the authority of the word and the change of the human heart by grace. In this scheme there is no sin, and, therefore, no place for repentance, and no divine forgiveness. There is no Savior and no need of one. There is the scoffing denial of Christ, in the phrase—"No deification of remarkable human beings"—It is a scoff at the grace of God, who says, "The new religion will not teach that character can be changed quickly." All this is the humanitarian plan of human culture, with five-foot shelves of old books, and "the improvement of social and industrial conditions." Before the rise and progress of the Kingdom of Christ which is encircling the globe with its light and love and practical beneficence, the Harvard program is both sad and silly.

The Unitarianism of New England has never seemed so utterly empty of all those things for which men seek after religion. If there was anything that could satisfy human-conscience and human heart to be found in the eloquence of Parker or Channing, Dr. Eliot has done his best to pour it out, spilled on the ground. A great company of men and women in Boston and its environment found the Word of God's grace as it was preached by Dr. Chapman and his evangelists the truth which they needed, the good news to which their hearts responded. It was the Way of Life to them. It will bear its fruit in lives pure and sweet, in good and happy homes, in good living among men, and the betterment of human society. It will bring patience in sorrow and peace in death, and comfort in an assured hope of immortality.

Just why the former president of Harvard, with his Unitarianism and his denial of Christianity should be

asked to the platform of an Episcopal school of Theology is an enigma to us. This is an "academic freedom" that is a defiant assault upon that which is most sacred and dear to all Christian churches. Dr. Eliot's Cambridge address can be put on the five-foot shelf with the thought of those who never knew the Christ God, who is "the Light of the World."

THE BEST EVERY TIME.

The temptation often comes to the minister to postpone to some occasion when more people will hear and appreciate it, some specially good work which he has prepared. He has labored hard on some interesting theme. He has wrought well upon it. He knows that he has something good to say. But the Sunday turns out badly. Not many are at the church. He dislikes to give all that good work to just a few. He makes up his mind to reserve it. He contends himself with giving to the little company which has assembled that very vague and indefinite thing, "a little talk." Has he done right? He would better give the best he has. He owes this to this people, to himself, and to God. That little congregation of the faithful few deserve, for their faithfulness, the very best he has to give them. They are usually of the class to appreciate it most. If they find that the minister has a habit of putting them off, because they are few in number, with "a little talk," they will soon come to say that they need not go, and the number of the faithful few will gradually grow even smaller. On the other hand, if they find that he gives them the very best he has, they feel rewarded; the compliment that is in it touches them; they get real good, too, in their hearts and minds, and they go away to advertise the fact that the minister does his best work on even the bad days. The numbers gradually increase, and the minister has his reward in a good name and in the appreciation of an increased number of faithful hearers.

By giving his best every time the preacher gains a reputation. He comes to be known as up to the mark all the time. He will not "fall down" in the estimation of the people and of the community. And his doing his best every time reacts upon himself. It keeps him in trim. It enables him to do even better the next time. The effort is quickening, elevating, stimulating. His vigor of thought, his beauty of diction, his aptness as illustration, the warmth of his heart and the glow of speech will all feel the gracious effect.

The best one can give is none too good to give. The oil for the sanctuary must be well beaten for the sanctuary's sake, no less than for the people's. The sacrifice offered must be without blemish as much for an individual worshipper as for the multitude. The ambassador must be as gracious and strong in representing his country and its distinctive principles in a little foreign court as in a great one. The souls of the minister's hearers are the wage. He may earn it as well in the little company as in the great throng. Indeed, many a time the most effective work one ever does is when, by reason of smallness of numbers he gets close to his hearers with the power and beauty and sweetness of the gospel. When thus dealing with them almost as man to man, if his shafts be not polished and true he may miss the happiest results of an effective ministry.